

**Be A Warhorse**

by

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NOTE: All Scripture reference is quoted from the Amplified Bible.

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## Introduction

I love stories about the Middle Ages; stories of knights, castles, and dragons. One cold, snowy Saturday, I was pleasantly engrossed in a movie about King Arthur. At that time, God was not on my mind. So I thought. As the movie continued, there was a scene in which King Arthur was giving Lady Guinevere a wedding gift. The squire rode a beautiful white horse into the scene and asked the King if he should go get the saddle for it. By that time, Lady Guinevere, in her excitement, had already climbed on her new horse who twisted and turned in reaction to its new rider. But within a short time, Guinevere had it responding to her. It was that scene that sparked God's Spirit to say "that is how I want you to be".

My mind was then taken back to a time a friend was telling me about a study she once sat under, about a warhorse - how God wants us to respond to His nudges, just like the horse, just like the scene I just witnessed.

Once I began to read about warhorses, I was amazed at how it fit so perfectly into a Bible study.

That is how this study was birthed. As you continue reading, let God move on your heart. Let Him give you a new perspective that will change your life.

## Having the Mentality of a Warhorse

Why would we want to have the mentality of warhorse? What does that even mean? Let's address what a warhorse is. Envision a gallant steed, adorned with armor and banners, standing majestically with its knight ready to mount for battle. That beautiful animal has gone through much training. It is vital that the knight and the horse act as one, for one error could mean death.

As the knight mounts, he knows that his horse will respond to his signals, his shifting, his slight nudges. Not a sound is uttered as they stealthily head towards their destination. Both horse and rider are so "in tune" with each other it is as if they can read each others mind.

That is the ultimate goal of this lesson, to learn to respond to the slightest nudge from God, to act as one with Him. God does not want us to react but to respond. What rider wants a horse that reacts? A horse that responds is much more reliable.

Imagine a knight in the throws of a battle when a loud cannon-

like noise suddenly erupts. Does he want his horse to react, to act in opposition to that loud sound? Of course not! That would most likely result in the horse rearing up in a panic and that would be devastating. The knight wants a horse that will respond, one that will act favorably. He wants a response to his nudging, not a reaction to the circumstances.

Just as the warhorse is not just a battle horse in armor, but an animal that requires much training; we are not just Christians, but God's children that require much training.

## Types of Horses

There were four main types of horses that interacted with the lives of the people during the Middle Ages. Each had a role to play and each was necessary for the town to survive.

There was the "good old work horse", the Trounce. This is the horse that plowed the fields, carried building supplies, transported heavy items. The Trounce was the farmers horse. Imagine a town or village without them.

Another important horse was the Courser. This was a cavalry horse, used for their speed, maneuverability, and endurance. They were often referred to as "messenger horses", being used to carry word from town to town. Imagine a town or village without them.

The Palfrey horse was the "everyday" horse. It was used for general riding and travel. They have a smooth gait and were comfortable to ride on the long trips between towns. Imagine a town or village without them.

And then there is the Destier, the most highly trained and desired warhorse. This was the one that the knights desired to ride into battle. The name is derived from the Latin word, dexter, which means "right hand". Imagine a town or village without them.

As you can see, each horse was valuable to the survival of people in the Middle Ages, just as we all have different roles and responsibilities in God's plan. Some plant, some water, some have more up-front gifts and ministries, while others serve behind the scenes. However, all are equally significant. We are not to compete against each other; instead, we are to complement each other. We all need one another to fulfill God's work.

We find this in 1 Cor 3:5-8 "What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Ministering servants [not heads of parties] through whom you believed, even as the Lord appointed to each his task: **6** I planted, Apollos watered, but God [all the while] was making it grow and [He] gave the increase. **7** So neither he who plants is anything nor he who waters, but [only] God Who makes it grow and become greater. **8** He who plants and he who waters are equal (one in aim, of the same importance and esteem), yet each shall



receive his own reward (wages), according to his own labor."

## Characteristics and Traits

As we have seen, each type of horse has its own important role to fulfill. But to become that Destier, that "right hand", there were characteristics and traits that needed to be stringently tested and developed.

Starting to sound familiar? The Bible tells us we are seated with Christ. Ephesians 2:6 "And He raised us up together with Him and made us sit down together [giving us joint seating with Him] in the heavenly sphere [by virtue of our being] in Christ Jesus (the Messiah, the Anointed One)."

And Christ is seated at the "right hand" of the Father.

Acts 2:32-34 "**32** This Jesus God raised up, and of that all we [His disciples] are witnesses. **33** Being therefore lifted high by and to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promised [blessing which is the] Holy Spirit, He has made this outpouring which you yourselves both see and hear.**34** For David did not ascend into the heavens; yet he himself says, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand and share My throne"

Let's examine this further. There are six key traits that warhorses have. The number one trait is the bloodline, the direct line of descent, genetics. We already have the most important trait instilled in us as evidenced by **Romans 9:8** "That is to say, it is not the children of the body [of Abraham] who are made God's children, but it is the offspring to whom the promise applies that shall be counted [as Abraham's true] descendants."

That is the easy one. The next five traits require work on our part and lots of practice...daily. A good warhorse needs to have a calm temperament in the midst of a battle full of loud noises, waving swords, etc. It would do a knight no good to have a beautiful, high spirited horse that defies training and is easily distracted by the sights and sounds of combat.

## Temperament

Temperament is defined as the manner of thinking, behaving, or reacting. What do you think about? How do you react to distractions? How easily are you brought to calm?

The Bible tells us how to think in Philippians 4:8 "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

We are exhorted to do this because when our mind is thinking on these things, we are not focused on the distractions of life. The definition of distraction is to cause to turn away from the original focus of attention; to unsettle. Look what happened when Peter got distracted, when he took his eyes off of Jesus.

MAT 14:29-30 "29 He said, Come! So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water, and he came toward Jesus.30 But when he perceived and felt the strong wind, he was frightened, and as he

began to sink, he cried out, Lord, save me [from death]!”

God gave us a mental picture of what happens when we take our focus off of Him. It is crucial that we learn to keep our minds focused on heavenly things, just as it was crucial for the warhorse to be trained to ignore the sights and sounds of battle. So how do we learn to stay focused? Lets look at how the warhorse was trained.

Horses have amazing peripheral vision and can detect motion almost instantly. Training them to not be distracted was vital. One popular means was to tie a flag to the end of a pole that was held by the rider like a lance. Of course the horse sees the flapping of the flag and turns its head to see what is there. It is then the job of the rider to bring the horse back to the task at hand and to ignore the flag. Not an easy task - but a necessary one - one that they, the horse and the rider, practice together over and over.

We are not much different than that warhorse in training. We are so quick to blame the devil for hard times, that we don't stop to think that perhaps God is waving a flag in our peripheral

vision as training to stay focused on Him instead of that distraction that is trying to get our attention. The apostles didn't worry about their circumstances because they were focused on God and what His direction for them was. Colossians 3:2 "And set your minds and keep them set on what is above (the higher things), not on the things that are on the earth."

Our natural reaction to negative circumstances is to look at them directly and worry or complain, just as the horse's natural reaction is to look at that flapping flag. The apostle Paul learned how to stay focused On God and the mission he had been given even in the face of difficulties and distractions, but this occurred over time as God trained him through trials over a period of years. Our goal should be like Paul's, learning not to focus on our circumstances, on our distractions, on our flapping flag. Philippians 4:12 "I know how to be abased and live humbly in straitened circumstances, and I know also how to enjoy plenty and live in abundance. I have learned in any and all circumstances the secret of facing every situation, whether well-fed or going hungry, having a sufficiency and enough to spare or going without and being in want."

## Sociability

Horses are social creatures, they herd by instinct. It was a common practice in the Middle Ages to place newer, inexperienced horses with more matured, trained horses. It also made training a little easier, as the older horses were not easily startled. Their calmness eased the newer horses fears.

Are we so different? We also are social creatures. Webster defines sociability as making fit for companionship with others. Did Paul not tell us to teach the younger, less experienced Christians?

Titus 2:3-5 "3 Bid the older women similarly to be reverent and devout in their deportment as becomes those engaged in sacred service, not slanderers or slaves to drink. They are to give good counsel and be teachers of what is right and noble, 4 so that they will wisely train the young women to be[a]sane and sober of mind (temperate, disciplined) and to love their husbands and their children, 5 To be self-controlled, chaste, homemakers, good-natured (kindhearted), adapting and subordinating themselves to their husbands, that the word of God may not be exposed to reproach (blasphemed or discredited)."

This is one of the reasons God has instructed us to gather together on a regular basis, that we may not only encourage one another but that the babes in Christ might have the opportunity to be in the midst of more mature, experienced Christians.

Hebrews 10:24-25 "**24** And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, **25** not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching."



## Adaptability

Adaptability is the ability to change, or be changed, to fit certain circumstances. Think about the warhorse. When the knight and the equine rode into battle, the horse must be adaptable to different types of terrain. He could be trotting on flat ground or running at a full gallop uphill. The ground could be muddy and slippery or dry and dusty. At any moment, the rider could signal his stallion, using only body movements or nudges, to change its gait. Getting the horse to the point where it was sensitive to the slightest movement of the knight and responded instantly to its master's command took countless hours of repetitive practice over varying terrains using different gaits. You certainly did not want your horse falling or stumbling because they were not accustomed to the mud.

Have you ever been 'around that same mountain' more than once and wondered why you weren't 'getting it'? Perhaps it is the same mountain but at a different gait or a different type of ground. God desires us to adapt our walk, our trot, our gallop, to different terrains. You may be walking up a snowy mountain or you may be running over flat ground with ditches to jump over.

We need not worry about our surroundings, we just need to stay focused. The idea is to be ready for any and all circumstances.

Philippians 4:19 "And my God will liberally supply (fill to the full) your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

## Endurance

Another important trait the war horse must have is endurance. Simply put, that is the act, quality, or power of withstanding hardship or stress. Can you imagine a knight riding on a horse that will quit in the heat of battle? Yet how often do we, as Christians, quit when we encounter difficult circumstances.

Generally speaking, endurance is a matter of heredity. That is why the bloodline was so important. You desired a horse from the top bloodlines with high endurance.

Our endurance comes from God, as seen in Romans 15:5 "Now may the God Who gives the power of patient endurance (steadfastness) and Who supplies encouragement..."

The Bible is full of Scripture on endurance. Our walk with God is not a sprint that is over quickly but a marathon, full of obstacles - not much different from that horse that must endure not only the battlefield but the trek to the battlefield.

## Trainability

Trainability is the responsiveness to being controlled; the willingness to accept commands. What good is a horse on the battle field or in the plowing field if they cannot be trained to do what needs to be done?

Ouch! Who among us likes to be controlled? How many of us see a sign that says "Wet Paint, Do Not Touch" and we stick a finger to it just to see?

God expects us to follow His commands, for He is our Creator. He knows our weaknesses and wants us to be responsive to Him, willing to obey. Remember,  
1COR 6:19-20 "...You are not your own,**20** You were bought with a price [purchased with a preciousness and paid for,made His own]..."

## Practice

So how do we achieve the mentality of war horse? Through much training and practice. The best definition of training that I have seen is "the process of bringing a person or animal to a standard of proficiency by practice and instruction."

That should be our goal, to be willing to accept the commands of God so that we may become proficient at doing His will. And this will only come through practice, practice, practice.

The gallant war horse, the Destier, the "right hand", did not become the most desired horse overnight. It took many, many hours of practice. The knight would use graduated exposure, small doses of annoying stimuli over a period of time. This allowed the horse to learn to recover quickly from new experiences, sounds, smells, etc. The more exposure it had to distractions, the more it became used to them.

## Confidence

In conclusion, you must have confidence in the Master. A horse that has a trainer that is unsure of himself will not allow itself to be easily led. However, a confident, consistent trainer will produce a well trained animal.

Do not think that every hardship is from the enemy. Try changing your perspective to see yourself as a highly desired creation of an almighty God, Who is training you to become what He created you to be.

Isaiah 45:9 "Woe to him who strives with his Maker!--a worthless piece of broken pottery among other pieces equally worthless [and yet presuming to strive with his Maker]! Shall the clay say to him who fashions it, What do you think you are making? or, Your work has no handles?"

Have confidence in the Master.

Psalms 62:8 "Trust in, lean on, rely on, and have confidence in Him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts before Him. God is a refuge for us (a fortress and a high tower). Selah [pause, and calmly think of that]!"